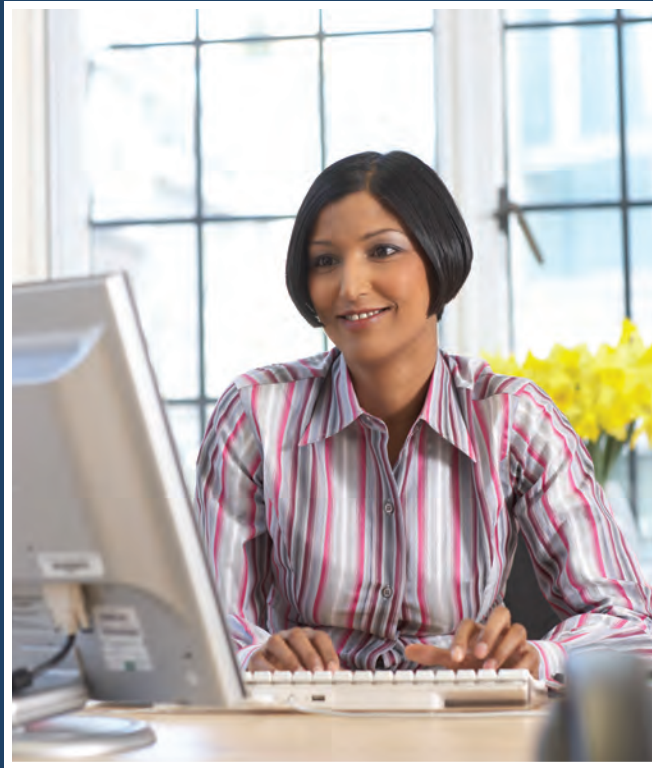


The Business Side of Early Childhood Education: Policies, Procedures, Financial Management, and Marketing



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Pre-Test

1. The terms *policy* and *procedure* are interchangeable in early childhood programs. T/F
2. Handbooks and manuals are helpful to have but considered optional for most early childhood programs. T/F
3. During the enrollment process, the primary responsibility of the early childhood administrator is to complete the appropriate paperwork. T/F
4. Policies regarding hiring practices, compensation, and benefits are essential for maintaining an effective staff. T/F
5. Meals and field trips are often the largest expense of an early childhood program. T/F
6. Word of mouth is among the most effective marketing strategies for promoting an early childhood program. T/F

Answers can be found at the end of the chapter.

Learning Objectives

After reading this chapter, you should be able to:

1. Define the terms *policy* and *procedure*, explain the similarities and differences between the two, and describe examples of each.
2. Identify and describe the most important components of a family handbook, an employee handbook, and an administrative manual.
3. Explain the role that enrollment policies and procedures play in establishing a positive, trusting relationship between families and program staff.
4. Describe how early childhood administrators use supplemental documents, such as job descriptions, to implement and enforce personnel policies.
5. Explain the differences between income and expenses, and describe the importance of having a balanced budget.
6. Describe multiple strategies for effectively marketing an early childhood program.

Lindsay Miller is now in her second week as the director of a YMCA child care center. One of the teachers, Jasmine, stops by Lindsay's office at the end of the day.

"Hi, Lindsay," says Jasmine. "I just wanted to let you know that I'll need to take some time off next month so I can go visit my family out of state. I'll be gone about a week."

"I appreciate your giving me some notice, Jasmine." Lindsay reaches for the staff handbook she keeps in a standing file near her desk. "Since I'm still new, I want to look at the time-off policy and confirm exactly how many vacation days each staff member is allowed to take. Hmm. It looks like full-time staff members can take five vacation days a year."

Jasmine looks concerned. She says, "Oh, I didn't know there was a limit to how many days I could take off."

Lindsay is genuinely surprised. "You didn't? I thought everyone who worked here had been given a copy of the staff handbook."

Jasmine replies, "I guess I have one, but I don't remember everything that's in there."

Lindsay nods. "It's a lot of important information. One of my goals as the new director is to take some time at each staff meeting to review the policies together, so we're all on the same page."

Jasmine frowns, "But does this mean I can't take any time off?"

"Well, I know that you've worked here for almost a year. I will check our staff attendance records and see how many days off you've already taken."

Jasmine says, "I haven't taken any vacation days at all. Just a few sick days."

"Then you should be fine," says Lindsay. "In the meantime, go ahead and fill out this time-off form, and we'll put a plan in place for a sub for you."

Introduction

Lindsay's experience illustrates how early childhood administrators use policies and procedures to guide their work and structure the various tasks they must accomplish to keep their programs running smoothly. Policies and procedures determine, for example, how children are enrolled, how employees are hired, paid, and supervised, and how budgets are managed. Though the specific details may vary from program to program, most programs share many universal topics, structures, and functions. This chapter will introduce these important characteristics of the policies and procedures that administrators use to manage early childhood programs.

3.1 Policies and Procedures in Early Childhood Programs

When children play games, such as tag, they usually play according to a set of shared rules. These rules, such as, "If I touch you, you're IT," determine what the players can and should do. Policies and procedures are like such rules, in that they determine how an early childhood program will be run.

Establishing policies and procedures is essential to the administration of an early childhood program. Together, they determine the structure and expectations for almost everything that happens in the day-to-day operation of the program.

Overview

Policies and procedures are very similar concepts but not exactly the same thing. A **policy** is a plan, a formal, written description of what the program will do to meet its goals. For example, an enrollment policy describes the rules and guidelines a program uses to enroll children and includes details such as how old a child must be to enroll and what documentation, such as an immunization history, is required in order for the child to begin attending the program. Policies are often created to make sure that a program conforms to specific laws or regulations.

A **procedure**, in contrast, is a description of the step-by-step process used to accomplish a task. While a policy describes *what* will happen, a procedure describes *how* it will happen. Further, while policies are often aligned with specific laws, regulations, or standards, procedures may vary from program to program. For example, an enrollment policy may state that a family must pay the first month of tuition before the first day of school. The fee collection procedure then describes how families pay tuition, step by step. The first step may be that they receive an invoice via email. The second step is the receipt of the payment itself and involves both logging the payment in the center's accounting records and issuing a receipt of payment for the family.

Policies and procedures may be shaped and influenced by the program's specific philosophy (Cherry, 2001). For example, a program with a philosophy that emphasizes collaborating with parents may have a very open and inclusive policy regarding parent volunteers in the classroom, while a program with a philosophy that emphasizes the development of autonomy and self-help skills may have a more restrictive policy regarding parent participation in the classroom.

Benefits of Effective Policies and Procedures

Clearly documented policies and procedures contribute to the efficiency and quality of early childhood services. When all staff members, from the director to the teachers to the cook to the bus driver, understand and follow quality policies and procedures, the tasks and functions of the program are more likely to be accomplished consistently.

The benefits of having clearly written policies and procedures are often most apparent with new staff members. Imagine that staff members could only be trained by word of mouth. While verbal



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Policies and procedures ensure the health and safety of children enrolled in early childhood programs.

training can be of great value, particularly on a day-to-day basis, there would be potential for error and misunderstanding if important information were only passed along in this manner. Written documentation helps ensure that information will be consistently communicated and followed.



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Well-written and effective policies and procedures are particularly important for training new staff.

Having clearly stated policies and procedures also helps ensure that the program conforms to the laws, regulations, and standards discussed in Chapter 2.

Establishing and Changing Policies and Procedures

Policies and procedures must be stable and consistent. If these documents are frequently changing, staff members and families may become confused about expectations and practices, which could lead to mis-

communication and misunderstandings. At the same time, there must be a plan in place for regular updates to respond to changes, such as the growth and expansion of program services. For most programs, an annual review to update program policies and procedures is frequent enough to keep practices and plans up to date.

When it is time for policies and procedures to be developed or updated, one important question is who has the authority to make the changes? The answer will depend on the organizational structure of the program. For example, if the director reports to a governing board, there may be bylaws that stipulate how policy changes are authorized, and in some cases the board may have to vote to approve a change.

When creating or changing program policies and procedures, it may be helpful to compare and contrast, or **benchmark** against, the documents and practices of other early childhood programs. Benchmarking allows administrators to measure the similarities and differences between their program practices and those of other programs. It can be a helpful tool in evaluating whether a specific set of policies and procedures is consistent with best practices in the field. Information about other early childhood programs can be collected by visiting program websites or by directly contacting administrators at other programs and offering to share information.

Implementing

As Lindsay discovered in the opening scenario, creating and documenting a policy, such as a time-off policy for employees, does not benefit the program if the policy is not implemented. Jasmine, the teacher in Lindsay's program, knew there was a staff handbook, but she was not familiar with the policies included in the document. Lindsay, as the director, knows it is her responsibility to implement the policy as written, and she also plans to review policies with her staff at upcoming meetings in order to make sure everyone on her staff is aware of and following the program's policies and procedures.

Early childhood administrators are responsible for implementing policies and procedures either directly, by making decisions or taking actions that are outlined in policies and procedures, or indirectly, by training and directing other staff members to follow policies and procedures.

Using Technology

The implementation of policies and procedures may be made significantly more efficient and accurate through the use of technology. Software is available to assist with many of the important processes described in this chapter, from enrolling children, to managing tuition payments, to determining payroll. Some of the primary technology needs of early childhood administrators include database management, financial management, and document organization and storage.

Database Management Software

A **database** is a collection of information, usually in digital form. A **database management system** refers to the software program that manages and organizes the information on your computer. A database management system can keep track of information about each child enrolled, such as family contact information and immunization histories, and information about each staff member, such as salary information and professional credentials.

The use of a database can support an administrator's implementation of policies and procedures when the process involves tracking information over time, such as the number of vacation days taken in a year, or when the process involves looking at many different files at once. For example, if a center's transition policy states that children are moved from a toddler classroom to a preschool classroom after they turn three, a database can be used to create a report listing the names and birthdays of all the children currently enrolled in the toddler room. This report can then be used to plan for and implement the transition policy.



Used by permission of Procare Software (www.procaresoftware.com).

When information about each child is stored in a database, administrators can search and sort files using different variables, such as age or gender.

Financial Management Software

Financial management software allows administrators to track important information regarding the program's finances, such as tuition payments, billing, and expenditures. Some financial management software allows administrators to continually track how well the program is meeting monthly and annual budget goals and monitor bank balances. Optional features may include payroll management.

Financial management software allows administrators to implement finance-related policies and procedures with greater efficiency and accuracy. For example, if a program's policy is that any family more than one week behind in tuition payments is not allowed to bring their child to the center

until the payment has been made, financial management software allows the administrator to quickly flag which accounts are late and, in some cases, generate automated email messages that alert families of their tuition status.

Document Organization and Storage

As early childhood programs continue to create and use sensitive information in a digital format, administrators need to find ways to organize and safely store digital files to comply with privacy policies that protect confidentiality of both families and staff. A **backup system**, a plan for creating digital copies of electronic files, is essential to prevent important information from getting lost or destroyed. In small early childhood programs, administrators may back up manually, regularly copying and storing information on external drives. In larger programs, an automated backup system may be necessary.

These three functions of technology—database management, financial management, and document organization—can each be addressed separately using software, such as the programs of Microsoft Office (Word, Excel, and Access), that are created for a broad professional market. In the field of early childhood education, there is also an option of purchasing a software package that combines many of these features and is created to meet the specific needs of early childhood programs. Examples of these products are *EZ Care*, *ProCare*, and *ClientTrack*. These specialized programs usually include some kind of core database for recording and storing information about each child enrolled. Most packages include a database for storing information about employees as well.

The fields in these specialized databases allow early childhood programs to efficiently track and monitor information such as a child's enrollment history, immunization and health records, and emergency contact information. In addition to the database, most packages also include financial management features that allow administrators to issue tuition bills and statements, track payments, and calculate late fees. The following are some other features that may be specific to these packages:

- **Menus and meal counts:** A staff member enters information about what food is served at the snack and lunch as well as the attendance at each meal. Then the software can create reports that can be used to determine food orders and track nutrition information required by the federal food program.
- **Employee time cards:** The management software can track days or hours worked and generate reports about trends in employee absences and tardiness.
- **Payroll software:** Information about staff salaries and pay rates can be used to generate payroll information, calculate withholding for various purposes, and even print checks.
- **Budget management:** This feature uses accounting data to generate cash flow reports and other budget monitoring documents.
- **Data hosting or automatic backup services:** Electronic data is safely stored in an off-site server, and data is automatically backed up at regular intervals, usually at least once a day, so information can't be lost due to error and computer loss or damage.

Enforcement

Once policies and procedures are established and reviewed, they must be followed and enforced. When administrators intentionally or unintentionally ignore the content of these important documents, the risks and potential problems that result may be significant. Certainly policies and procedures that protect the safety and health of the children must be consistently followed and enforced.

Others, such as the procedure for employees to request time off, must be consistently enforced in order to ensure fair and equitable treatment of employees. An administrator who fails to consistently follow program policies and procedures risks damaging staff morale and losing credibility as an authority figure.

The role of the early childhood administrator in enforcing policies involves regularly monitoring policy compliance and implementing appropriate consequences when policies are not followed. For example, regular monitoring of compliance with time-off policies means the administrator must regularly review employee attendance and time-off records. Each time an employee misses a day of work or requests time off, the administrator must check that employee's records and see if the employee is complying with the policy, based on his or her work history. If the employee is not in compliance, the administrator must implement an appropriate consequence. If an employee requests a vacation day in advance and the administrator finds the employee is not yet entitled to take additional vacation days, the administrator would deny the request.

What Would You Do?

Angela Rollings is the director of Sunnyvale Child Care Center. One afternoon Ms. Johnson, a parent of one of the toddlers, stops by her office holding a tray of cupcakes. Angela greets Ms. Johnson and says, "Wow, those cupcakes look delicious."

Ms. Johnson replies, "Well, today is Jamie's third birthday, and I baked a treat for her class. Is it okay if I bring them to the classroom now? I know it's almost time for the afternoon snack."

Angela says, "I'm so sorry, Ms. Johnson, but I have to tell you that our center's policy states that birthday treats must be commercially packaged with a label stating the ingredients."

The policy is based on the state health code that was created to protect children with food allergies."

Ms. Johnson is very upset. "What? What policy? I didn't know that. What can I do? Jamie is expecting a special treat."

If you were in Angela's position, what would you do?

- Disregard the policy just this once and let Ms. Johnson bring the cupcakes to Jamie's class.
- Work with Ms. Johnson to reschedule Jamie's birthday celebration so she has a chance to buy commercially packaged cupcakes.
- Have Ms. Johnson give each family a cupcake to take home, and let each family decide whether or not they want their child to eat it.
- Dig into the center's supply closet and find a bag of little toys that Ms. Johnson can give the children instead of the cupcakes.

Explanation: Early childhood administrators are responsible for ensuring policies are followed. They are the role models and the gatekeepers; their actions must communicate the message that, "The buck stops here." In this situation, Angela must follow the policy. If she does not, she will undermine her own authority by demonstrating to staff and families that policies are not important. The next important consideration is the center's relationship with Ms. Johnson and her family. Angela must find ways to communicate and collaborate with Ms. Johnson so that she feels heard and respected, even if the program can't allow her to serve the cupcakes. There are any number of ways Angela can do this, such as offering a substitute treat or party favor to give the children instead of the cupcakes.



Blend Images/SuperStock

Enforcing policies can be challenging when the decisions have an impact on family traditions or celebrations.

Questions to Think About

1. If an administrator wanted to benchmark a program policy, by comparing it to the policies of other early childhood programs, how might the administrator go about doing that? What process might be helpful for gathering information and making comparisons?
2. What might be some of the benefits to using an electronic database to store information about staff and families, in addition to hard copy files?

3.2 Handbooks and Manuals

Once policies and procedures are written, the effort would be wasted if the documents were hidden away in a drawer. Successful implementation and enforcement of policies and procedures requires easy access to these documents. Often the best way to organize them is to collect them in a handbook or manual.

Employees should receive a staff handbook at the time they are hired. Parents should receive a family handbook at the time their children enroll. Early childhood administrators need ready access to all handbooks, both staff and family, as well as any administrative handbooks or manuals.

Many state licensing agencies require that staff members and parents sign a form that confirms they have received and read their respective handbooks. These confirmations can be helpful later to support the enforcement of policies if there are any questions about whether or not the staff member or parents were fully informed of the policies at the time of hire or at the beginning of enrollment.

Family Handbook

A **family handbook** is a collection of documents that describe the policies and procedures parents and family members need to know or would like to know about the early childhood program their child attends. Some of the policies and procedures, such as the birthday policy discussed in the previous section, are important for parents to know and understand because parents are expected to follow them. Others are important because parents simply want to know how the staff members will be caring for and teaching their children.

Typically, this information is organized into a booklet and includes information about the mission and philosophy of the program. The family handbook may also include reference information that will be useful to parents, such as the names of staff members and a school calendar (North Dakota Child Care Resource and Referral, n.d.).

Topics Addressed in a Family Handbook

A family handbook must be clearly organized and easy to read (Figure 3.1). Parents of young children are busy people, and they must be able to find and take in the information quickly. For parents who do not speak English as their first language, the family handbook should be available in translation. Most family handbooks begin with an introductory section that describes the history, mission, and philosophy of the early childhood program. This opening section may also include an overview of the curriculum structure and information about the staff, such as a photo and brief biography of each staff member.

The most important parts of the family handbook are the specific descriptions of policies and procedures that family will be expected to follow and that families can expect staff to follow. The handbook should include information about registration procedures, paying fees and tuition, and a refund policy. It should also include practical information such as what to bring on the first day of school, drop-off and pick-up procedures, and the late pick-up policy.

Policies related to children’s health and safety are especially important to document and communicate to families, such as the illness policy that describes under what circumstances an ill child would not be allowed to come to school.

Figure 3.1: Sample Family Handbook Table of Contents

Family Handbook	
Table of Contents	
1. Our History, Mission and Philosophy.....	1
2. Our Curriculum.....	3
3. Our Staff.....	4
4. Enrollment Policies.....	6
5. Program Information.....	7
6. School Calendar.....	9

A family handbook usually includes information about the program philosophy, the curriculum, and how the classroom day is organized.

Below is an example of text from a family handbook. In this example, families are given “suggestions” that they are encouraged to follow, rather than specific rules that cannot be broken. In this case, the text describes classroom practices that are not a formal policy.

Clothing

Your children will participate in a variety of experiences designed to enhance their social, emotional, physical, and intellectual development. These experiences include activities such as painting, pasting, and outdoor play. Please note the following suggestions:

- *Dress your child in comfortable play clothes.*
- *Send your child in appropriate clothing for the weather.*
- *Send your child in sturdy shoes with nonslip soles.*

Employee Handbook

An **employee handbook** is a collection of documents that describe the policies and procedures that employees must follow. The employee handbook usually includes a specific set of **personnel policies** describing the roles, expectations, rights, and responsibilities of the employees.

Topics Addressed in an Employee Handbook

An employee, or staff, handbook usually begins with general information about the program, such as the organization's mission and history (Figure 3.2). For larger programs with several levels of supervisors and administrators, the handbook may also include an organizational chart, as well as a description of each role and the responsibilities of that position. This information helps employees understand to whom they report and also helps to communicate opportunities for future advancement within the organization.

Usually the lengthiest and most important section of the employee handbook contains the formal personnel policies. These policies generally cover topics related to compensation and **benefits** such as salaries, benefits, and absences. Personnel policies also usually address topics related to employment law, such as a list of employee actions that would be grounds for dismissal. Other issues related to employment law, such as nondiscrimination policies, will be discussed later in this chapter.

In addition to formal policies, an employee handbook may include descriptions of specific procedures employees are expected to implement, such as emergency evacuation plans. Information that employees may want for reference, such as a staff email list, a map of the building and grounds, or a school calendar may be included as part of the handbook or, if they are documents that require frequent revision, they may be separate supplemental pieces.

3.2: Sample Employee Handbook Table of Contents

Employee Handbook	
Table of Contents	
1. Employee Welcome.....	1
2. About our Center.....	2
3. Who's Who.....	4
4. Personnel Policies.....	6
5. Classroom Procedures and Practices....	9
6. Calendars, Schedules and Lists.....	12

An employee handbook should serve as a comprehensive reference for new and existing employees when they have questions about policies or procedures.

The following sample excerpt demonstrates the formal and direct language often used to communicate with employees about essential policies and practices.

Confidentiality Policy

Due to the nature of information that you will know as a teacher of young children, it is imperative that you keep some information confidential. Be very sensitive about discussing children's developmental needs and family information in public places such as the center lounge or hallway. This includes off-site discussions as well. Follow the NAEYC Code of Ethical Conduct regarding confidentiality. Any questions or concerns should be discussed with your supervisor. Protection of the interests of each child and family is vital in maintaining a standard of professionalism and privacy. Repeated disregard of the confidentiality policy may be grounds for dismissal.

Administrative Manual

Most of the information provided in an employee handbook is relevant to all employees, including administrators and directors. In addition to the information in the employee handbook, most early childhood programs also have developed policies and procedures that describe the administrative practices that are relevant only to the work of administrators. Often this information is organized into an **administrative manual**, which details policies and procedures such as the supervision of staff, the documentation of enrollment patterns, the maintenance of licensing compliance, and the collection of fees.

Since the administrative manual is not as widely distributed as the family handbook or staff handbook, this information may be simply collected in a binder or perhaps stored electronically on the administrator's computer.

Topics Addressed in an Administrative Manual

Information included in an administrative manual can usually be divided into three broad categories: information about supervising staff, information about working with families, and information about managing finances and resources (Figure 3.3). The information about supervising staff is related to the administrator's role in implementing and enforcing personnel policies, such as procedures for recruiting, selecting, and hiring staff, as well as a **salary scale**, a plan describing the levels of compensation, and a policy for determining salary increases.

An administrative manual usually includes information related to enrolling children and communicating with families, such as procedures for creating and managing a wait list. Information about managing finances and resources might include details about the procedure for collecting tuition, for processing payroll, and for monitoring the monthly cash flow. The administrative manual may also include program-specific details for maintaining licensing compliance and accreditation status, such as a calendar or timeline with specific due dates for renewals and reports.

Figure 3.3: Sample Administrative Manual Table of Contents

Administrative Manual	
Table of Contents	
1. Personnel Procedures: Hiring and Terminating Employment.....	1
2. Working with Families.....	4
3. Managing Finances.....	6
4. Licensing Procedures.....	9
5. Calendars and Schedules.....	12

The administrative manual covers a variety of topics from enrollment procedures and fee collection to salary scales and budgeting.

Here's an excerpt from an administrative manual:

Hiring Procedures

At ABC Preschool, when a lead teaching position becomes available, whether because a staff member has resigned or has been terminated, the position should be widely advertised, both internally and externally, to attract a broad pool of candidates. Assistant teachers who wish to advance to a lead teacher position should be encouraged to apply, as long as they meet the minimum qualifications for the position.

The preschool director works closely with the chair of the personnel committee of the board of directors to place notices of the open position on job boards and websites. After resumes and applications have been received and screened, the preschool director conducts interviews and chooses a final candidate for the position. The final candidate is invited to lead a story-time session at the school in order for the candidate to be observed by the preschool director and the chair of the personnel committee. The preschool director has the authority to make the final decision to hire, in consultation with the personnel committee.

Questions to Think About

1. How is an administrative manual different from an employee handbook? How are they the same?
2. Some organizations now choose to create only electronic versions, not hard copies, of employee handbooks. What might be the benefits and challenges of this practice?

3.3 Specific Policies and Procedures Regarding Children and Families

One of the most important roles of an early childhood administrator is working with families. Responsibilities of the administrator include welcoming newly enrolled children and families, creating and maintaining children’s files, and collecting fees and tuition. Often the administrator is the first person parents and children meet when they initially visit or tour a program, and that encounter sets the tone for all future impressions and experiences. If parents are greeted by someone who is friendly and knowledgeable, and who takes the time to answer their questions, they are more likely to form a positive impression of the program. However, if a family’s first experience with an administrator involves phone calls or email messages that are not returned, or a tour led by an administrator who is distracted and rushed, the family may form a negative impression of the program, regardless of the quality of the curriculum and services.

Let’s look closely at one family’s experience enrolling their child in preschool, and take note of how the administrator manages the enrollment policies and procedures. The following scenario demonstrates how the implementation of formal, written policies and procedures enhances and supports the director’s efforts to build a trusting relationship with a new family. Consistently communicating and implementing enrollment policies means both parties, the family and the school, know what to expect from each other.

The Enrollment Process

Jonathan and Rachel Williams have a son, Jayden, who will be turning three in a few months. Currently, Jayden’s grandmother takes care of him during the day while his parents work. Jayden’s parents have been happy with this child care arrangement but believe that it will soon be time for him to develop the social and academic skills that will help him get ready for kindergarten.

A family friend recommended Green Apple Preschool to Jayden’s parents. Green Apple is a full-day preschool, open from 7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Rachel, Jayden’s mom, calls Green Apple Preschool and speaks to the director, Melissa.

Initial Inquiry

Rachel’s initial questions have to do with the daily schedule. She asks, “What time would I have to drop off Jayden in the morning, and when would I pick up him up?” and “What if we want to keep him home for a day, just to spend time with his grandma?” After answering Rachel’s initial questions about the program and assuring her that the school’s daily schedule would offer the flexibility their family needs, Melissa offers to give Rachel and her husband a tour of the school. Rachel agrees and they schedule the visit. Melissa offers Rachel the option of bringing Jayden with them for the tour, but Rachel prefers to come with just her husband, so she can observe and ask questions without distraction.

Program Tour and Wait List

Melissa gives Rachel and Jonathan a tour of the classrooms and the playground. She takes time to point out how the teachers are interacting with children during free play, monitoring the groups for safety, and also asking them questions that encourage creative thinking. Melissa offers Rachel and

Jonathan some literature about the school and asks them some questions about Jayden, his personality and his play preferences, and their hopes for his preschool experience. Melissa explains that the preschool is currently full, but they would be happy to put Jayden's name on the waiting list.

The day after the tour, Rachel stops by the school with a completed wait list application and the initial tuition deposit. Melissa gives Rachel a receipt for the payment and reviews the wait list policy with Rachel. She explains that being added to the wait list doesn't guarantee enrollment in the program. When an opening becomes available, Melissa will contact the first family listed on the list, and she will give them 48 hours to decide if they would like to take the space. Melissa gives Rachel a printed copy of the wait list policy.

Admission

About six weeks later, a space becomes available for Jayden, and Melissa contacts Jayden's parents and offers them the spot, reminding them that they have 48 hours to respond before the space will be offered to the next family on the wait list. Rachel calls Melissa the next day and accepts the space. Melissa makes an appointment for Rachel and Jonathan to visit the school to complete the preenrollment paperwork.

Preenrollment Paperwork

A few days later, Rachel and Jonathan meet with Melissa to complete the preenrollment paperwork, providing general information, such as contact information for parents and family members, as well as specific information about Jayden's health history and allergies. The Williams complete the forms as hard copies, which Melissa will later scan and store electronically. She will also enter basic, important information, such as Jayden's emergency contact information, into the school's database.

Melissa gives the family a copy of the Family Handbook and goes over the policies and information about which parents most frequently ask questions, such as the morning drop-off procedures and the late pick-up policy. She also conducts a short preenrollment interview, asking Rachel and Jonathan some questions that will help the staff get to know Jayden better, such as his current nap schedule, his favorite playtime activities, and his food preferences. After the visit, Melissa shares this information with Bruce and Dana, coteachers in the Blue Room where Jayden will be enrolled.

Preenrollment Visit

At Green Apple Preschool, part of the enrollment procedure is a preenrollment visit that allows the child to spend some time in the new classroom accompanied by one or both parents. The primary purpose of the visit is to help familiarize the child with the new teachers, children, and environment. Melissa's experience as the director of the school has shown her that sometimes parents benefit even more from the preenrollment visit, because time in the classroom helps ease any anxieties the parents may be feeling about leaving their child in a new place.

Melissa's role during the preenrollment visit is to welcome the family at the door and introduce them to the classroom teachers. She does not stay in the classroom during the visit. She knows the teachers will introduce Jayden to the other children and find a way for him to join in their play. She also knows the teachers will find a comfortable spot for Jayden's parents to sit and observe. Jayden's preenrollment visit in the Blue Room goes very well, and he seems to enjoy playing with the other children. Before the Williams family leaves, Melissa checks in with them to see if they have any new questions and to confirm the plan for the first day of school.

First Day of School and Settling In

Both of Jayden's parents come along on his first day at Green Apple Preschool. Melissa greets them at the door and once again welcomes the whole family. She shows Rachel and Jonathan how parents enter their security code to gain access to the building, and where they can drop off their tuition payment each month. This is information they had already discussed the day Rachel and Jonathan completed the preenrollment paperwork, but Melissa knows that there is a lot of new information for the parents to take in at once, so she is patient about reviewing policies and procedures with each new family.

When the Williams family arrives in the Blue Room, Jayden's teachers, Bruce and Dana, welcome the family and help Jayden hang his jacket in his cubby. When it's time to say good-bye, Jayden cries and clings to his mother for a few minutes until the teachers convince Jayden to join some of the other children in the block corner. Before Jayden's parents leave, Melissa reminds them that the school has an open door policy for parents and they are welcome to visit any time.



Natalie Fobes/Stone/Getty Images

Enrollment procedures help support the development of a trusting relationship between families and program staff.

After Jayden has been attending preschool for a few weeks, Melissa makes a point of checking in with Rachel and Jonathan to see if they have any questions or concerns. Both parents are pleased with Jayden's transition to preschool.

Melissa's work in enrolling and welcoming Jayden demonstrates many of the important policies and procedures that are typical of early childhood programs. These included the procedure for handling initial inquiries and parent tours, the wait list policy, the procedure for collecting enrollment paperwork and the policies dic-

tating which information to collect, the procedure for welcoming families with a preenrollment visit, the policy regarding parent access to the facility, and the procedure for collecting tuition payments.

When these policies are clearly documented and communicated with families, parents are more at ease during a transition that can sometimes be very stressful. Melissa managed all these policies and procedures within the context of building a trusting relationship between Jayden's family and the Green Apple Preschool. The next step for Melissa, as the administrator who oversees the enrollment process, is to make sure that all the documentation regarding Jayden's enrollment is properly included in Jayden's file.

Child Files

In most programs, a primary file for each child is created at the time of enrollment. Usually this is a hard copy file, paper documents stored in a file folder labeled with the child's name. The initial documents include the forms the parents filled out at the time of enrollment, such as a general enrollment form and a health form.

Many programs also maintain information about each child electronically. Many organizations offer electronic versions of their forms for parents, such as a writable PDF (Adobe portable document formula), that families can download from a website or can request via email. Most state licensing agencies, however, still require that paper documents are available for review on site, so administrators who collect information for children's files electronically may still have to print out the documents and store them in the hard copy files.

Documents in a child's file may be used both internally, to plan and implement care and education services, and externally, to report information to outside agencies. For example, information about a child's food allergies would be used internally to create menus or plan for alternative food choices. Information about a child's immunization history would be used externally, to demonstrate to state or local health departments that the program is in compliance with child care health requirements.

A review of children's files is a routine part of most licensing inspections and accreditation reviews. Every licensing and regulating body has some kind of requirement related to this documentation. Most child files typically include the following information:

- child's full name, date of birth, and gender;
- date of enrollment;
- scheduled days and hours of care;
- name, home address, and telephone number of parents (or guardians);
- work hours of parents and name, address, and telephone number of place of employment;
- name, address, and telephone number of the child's physician;
- name, address, and telephone number of all persons authorized to pick up the child;
- name, address, and telephone number (day and evening) of persons to be contacted in an emergency if the parents cannot be reached;
- information regarding the child's development or medical needs;
- reports of health examinations and immunization history; and
- list of allergies.

Care must be taken to protect the confidentiality of the information contained within children's files. Paper files should be stored in a locked location, and digital files should be password protected.



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Teachers and caregivers need access to some essential information about each child, but most documents should be stored in an administrator's office.

Information about families should be available to staff on a “need to know” basis, which means there should be a specific reason why staff members need the information before they are granted access to it. For example, an office assistant or clerical worker who is assisting the director in preparing for a licensing review would be allowed to view each file and check for up-to-date immunization records, but she would probably not be given the keys or passwords to the whole file system.

Teachers and caregivers who work directly with children will need to know some information about each child in their classrooms, such as the names and contact information for each child’s parents. Even this basic information is considered confidential and should be stored in a locked drawer or cabinet. After children leave a program and are no longer enrolled, the program must continue to securely store the child’s files. Guidelines vary from state to state, but many early childhood programs save child files for at least 5 to 10 years after enrollment.

Fee Collection

For many early childhood administrators, the fee or tuition collection process is among their least favorite parts of their job. Most people choose the field because they want to have positive, supportive interactions with families, not because they want to ask people for money. Yet collecting payments from families is essential for the operations of most programs. The establishment of clear, predictable procedures for making payments is one of the best strategies for reducing the stress and diminishing any tension between parents and administrators around tuition or fee collection.

Parents need to know exactly how much they will be charged for tuition each week or each month. The tuition rates should be clearly documented, and this information should be readily available to families. If tuition rates change, families should be given advance notice. If any additional fees will be charged, such as fees for late pick up or fees for late payment, that information should also be given to families at the time of enrollment, either as part of the family handbook or as a supplemental document, so there will be no surprises later.

In some programs tuition and fees rates may vary from family to family, depending on the family’s income and size. A **sliding fee scale** may be used to determine how much assistance, in the form of public or private scholarships or aid, the family will be given to reduce the burden of their tuition payments. Again, this information should be communicated in advance to all families to make the process and policies as transparent as possible. The fee collection policy, as described in the family handbook, should clearly state the deadlines for making payments and the consequences when payments are late.

Most people experience some awkwardness or embarrassment when talking about money, and this discomfort can be somewhat eased when the process is automated. An online payment system that generates automatic email reminders and alerts to families when tuition is due or late can eliminate the need for the administrator or director to confront parents on site. However, if a family is experiencing significant economic hardship and is struggling to pay their tuition bill, a confidential and sensitive conversation between the administrator and the parent is necessary.

While the administrator may be sympathetic and understanding of the family’s situation, the administrator is responsible for consistently implementing fee collection policies, which may mean having to disenroll a family because they could not pay their tuition. This difficult process is made easier when the fee collection policy stated in the family handbook is very clear.

Questions to Think About

1. How is the role of the early childhood administrator different from the role of the teacher in welcoming a new child to the program? How are the roles similar?
2. What are some challenges an administrator might encounter related to fee collection and what are some strategies for overcoming these challenges?

3.4 Staffing Policies and Documents

The core content in an employee handbook consists of the personnel policies. The administrator's efforts to implement and enforce staff policies are most successful when expectations of staff are clearly communicated and every staff member is treated with fairness and respect. There are several policies and documents that play key roles in the administrator's efforts to communicate staff expectations and to ensure that each staff member is treated equitably. Among these tools are job descriptions, compensation policies, and nondiscrimination policies.

Writing a Job Description

Personnel policies apply to every employee. Another document is needed to describe the responsibilities specific to each staff role. To meet that need, job descriptions serve as important supplements to personnel policies.

A job description is a document that specifies the responsibilities and tasks of a specific role or position. Each employee role in an early childhood program, such as lead teacher, assistant teacher, playground attendant, janitor, or secretary, should have a separate and unique job description.

A job description is an important part of the ongoing training process. The list of responsibilities can be used by the supervisor as a guide for developing training goals and materials. In short, job descriptions help to clarify roles and responsibilities so everyone knows exactly what is required and expected of them.

Job descriptions play an especially important role for an early childhood administrator when enforcing personnel policies related to poor job performance. While personnel policies typically define the process administrators will follow when a staff member is not meeting the expectations of the position, the job description is the document that specifies exactly what those expectations are. In the event that an employee must be terminated, the administrator will likely use both documents to determine the process and ensure that expectations and consequences are very clear.

When job descriptions are clearly written, aligned with the personnel policies, and understood by all staff members, morale is more likely to be high because it's clear what it means to do good work. When made available to all staff members, job descriptions can also help motivate staff to continue to grow professionally. For example, when assistant teachers read the job description for lead teacher, they can determine which skills they need to develop and which credentials they might need to earn to meet the qualifications for lead teacher.



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Clear policies for hiring and training staff are essential for the sake of recruiting quality employees and eliciting their strong job performance.

Nondiscrimination Policies

Early childhood administrators must know that there are many laws that relate to the recruiting, hiring, and supervision of staff. For example, the federal Fair Labor Standards Act determines legal guidelines for minimum wage and overtime pay, and the Immigration and Nationality Act determines the procedures required for any employee to document U.S. citizenship or eligibility to work in the United States.

Early childhood administrators or the board members they report to may choose to consult an attorney when developing or changing personnel policies to ensure compliance with all state and federal employment laws. For example, organizations that receive federal grants are usually required to create a nondiscrimination policy that applies to both staff and clients and publish the policy in their handbooks and other materials. A nondiscrimination policy states that the organization is committed to not discriminating against any person by denying services, employment, or benefits on the basis of factors such as race, color, national origin, disability, or age (USDHHS, n.d.).

Early childhood administrators or the board members they report to may choose to consult an attorney when developing or changing personnel policies to ensure compliance with all state and federal employment laws.

Questions to Think About

1. Think about your own experience starting a new job, whether in early childhood education or another field. Were you given a job description and a staff handbook? If so, were they helpful to you? Where there any policies or procedures you wish you had been better informed about at the time?
2. Some organizations might choose to create a nondiscrimination policy even if they don't receive federal funds. Why might an organization make that choice when they are not required to do so?

3.5 Financial Management

The implementation and enforcement of program policies often require that early childhood administrators have financial management knowledge and skills. No program can exist without adequate funding, and early childhood administrators must be able to create, manage, and monitor budgets and financial operations.

A budget is a financial forecast, usually set up for a period of one year. It describes a plan for **income** and **expenses** (money in versus money out). The basic principle of sound budget planning is that income and expenses must *balance*, which means that total income must equal total expenses (Figure 3.4).

Figure 3.4: Sample Child Care Budget

Income

Item	Description/Detail	Number of Children	Amount	Total for Year
Child Care Fees	Infants	4	\$ 60,000.00	\$345,000.00
	Toddlers	10	\$125,000.00	
	Pre-Schoolers	16	\$160,000.00	
CACFP food grant		30	\$ 25,000.00	\$ 25,000.00
Fundraising			\$ 30,000.00	\$ 30,000.00
United Way grant			\$ 10,000.00	\$ 10,000.00
Total for Year			\$410,000.00	\$410,000.00

Expenses

Item	Description/Detail	Number of Staff	Amount	Total for Year
Salaries	Directors	1	\$ 44,000.00	\$250,000.00
	Teachers	7	\$ 196,000.00	
	Part-Time Food Service Worker	1	\$ 10,000.00	
Staff Costs	Benefits, taxes, health insurance	1 Director	\$ 11,000.00	\$ 64,200.00
		7 Teachers	\$ 49,000.00	
	Professional Development	7	\$ 4,200.00	
Insurance	Liability	\$35/child	\$ 1,050.00	\$ 1,050.00
	Accident	\$4/child	\$ 120.00	\$ 120.00
Building	Rent			\$ 43,200.00
	Custodial			\$ 5,000.00
	Utilities and Phone			\$ 7,000.00
	Maintenance/Repairs			\$ 3,000.00
	Snow Removal			\$ 400.00
Consumable Supplies	Food			\$ 23,400.00
	Classroom Supplies			\$ 3,600.00
	Maintenance Supplies			\$ 1,030.00
Program	Equipment			\$ 2,000.00
	Miscellaneous			\$ 1,000.00
Administration	Office Supplies			\$ 1,000.00
	Advertising			\$ 800.00
	Postage			\$ 500.00
	Professional Services			\$ 800.00
	Dues, Fees			\$ 1,000.00
	Miscellaneous			\$ 900.00
Total Expenses				\$410,000.00

As this sample budget shows, tuition is usually the main source of income for child care programs. Grants are secured and fundraisers are held to ensure the balance between income and expenses.

Program Costs and Funding

On the “money out” side of the equation, personnel costs, including salaries and benefits, will likely be the biggest expense, followed by rent or mortgage, food, supplies, and liability insurance (Whitehead, 2003). The range in the total expenses for an annual budget is very broad. Even a small program, such as a family child care home or a part-day preschool with just a few classrooms, might have expenses starting at around \$50,000 per year. While a large multisite child care corporation might have a total of annual expenses in the millions of dollars.

To bring in the funds necessary to meet these expense (the “money in” side of the equation), most early childhood programs charge a fee or tuition for the services they provide. Tuition rates can range widely and may be charged on a monthly or weekly basis. Child care tuition for infants and toddlers is usually much higher than the rate for older children because the child-to-teacher ratios for younger children are much smaller, and the staffing costs are much greater.

Tuition rates also vary depending upon the cost of living and market rates in each community. For example, in urban areas such as San Francisco, infant child care rates might be as high as \$2,000 per month, while in smaller towns or more rural areas, you might find child care programs that charge infant care tuition rates as low as \$600 per month (Child Care Aware, 2012).

Low-income families who are not able to pay for their children’s care and early education may be eligible for public or private assistance that will lower their payments, though it is very unusual that early childhood services are offered at no cost. When tuition payments are subsidized by private or public grants or contributions, that income is recorded as a separate category of funding in the program’s budget.

Programs may receive different types of government funding at the federal, state, or local level. One example of federal funding is the USDA Child & Adult Care Food Program, which provides supplemental funds to help cover the cost of meals. One example of state funding would be state prekindergarten funds that are distributed through a local board of education, such as the Bright from the Start program in the state of Georgia (Barnett, Carolan, Fitzgerald, & Squires, 2011).

Foundation grants from nonprofit organizations that have been created to distribute funds for specific causes can be another source of income. Some foundations are started by individuals or families, while others are started by for-profit corporations with a charitable mission. Typically, foundation funds are given to nonprofit early childhood programs. Also, foundation grants are usually short term, from one to three years, meaning they cannot be relied upon for permanent income.



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The traditional bake sale is an example of a type of fundraiser that might help raise money when tuition, fees, and grants don’t provide enough income to cover expenses.

If a program cannot secure enough resources through tuition fees, government funding, or grants, they may rely, at least in part, on **fundraising**. The term *fundraising* refers to collecting donations or contributions through special events such as auctions, sales, or from individual donors. Early childhood administrators often play an important role in organizing fundraising activities or representing the program at fundraising events.

For some programs that are part of a nonprofit organization, fundraising may be a significant source of income. Fundraising is usually a regular part of a program's annual budget, a source of income the program relies upon year after year.

Budgeting Basics

A budget is prepared in advance and used for planning purposes. Often when an administrator prepares a budget, the document must be approved by a supervisor, owner, or a governing board. Once approved, an administrator is usually responsible for making sure the program follows the budget. Monitoring the budget usually takes place on a regular timeline, such as once a month. Using documents like bank statements and billing reports, an administrator, an accountant, or a bookkeeper prepares a monthly **cash flow report** showing how well the program is meeting the budget in terms of income and expenses (Copeland, 2008).

Income and expenses are usually organized into categories, or **line items**, such as salaries or tuition. Each month an administrator, or another leader such as a board member, should review how well each line item matches the projections in the annual budget.

Focus On: Budgeting for Quality

The old saying, "You get what you pay for," is certainly true in early childhood education. Quality costs money. Creating and operating high-quality programs means paying teachers good salaries, providing benefits for staff, and maintaining safe and attractive facilities. Unfortunately, families who need quality early childhood services for their children often don't have the means to pay the full cost of tuition and fees that would cover all the program expenses.

In response to this dilemma, the NAEYC has published a position statement called "Quality, Compensation, and Affordability." NAEYC believes, "Good quality for all children, equitable compensation for all staff, and affordable access for all families are essential elements for the provision of early childhood services in this country" (NAEYC, 1995).



Stockbyte/Thinkstock

Responsibilities regarding financial management are sometimes shared between administrators, board members, volunteers, and clerical staff.

The position goes on to describe the specific benefits of quality programs to young children, the importance of compensating program staff with equitable salaries and benefits, and how difficult it is for families to find affordable options for early childhood care and education.

All three issues, quality, compensation, and affordability, are equally important. The leaders of early childhood programs, including the administrators as well as board members or owners, must make difficult decisions about how to balance the three issues. It is the position of NAEYC that one cannot be

(continued)

Focus On: Budgeting for Quality (*continued*)

compromised for the benefit of the others. For example, teachers shouldn't have to accept low wages simply because the families enrolled in the program cannot afford to pay an increase in tuition rates. The struggle to balance these issues and advocate for all three is an ongoing effort of advocates for early childhood education.

Questions to Think About

1. Some early childhood programs hire a part-time bookkeeper to help manage some of the procedures related to financial management. If you were an early childhood administrator in this situation, which tasks would you delegate to the bookkeeper and why?
2. Imagine that you are a volunteer board member for a small nonprofit child care center. The board has to make some tough choices about the budget for next year. If you don't raise salaries, some of the teachers may resign. If you raise tuition rates, some of the families might not be able to afford to stay in the program. How might the board go about making these decisions?

3.6 Marketing

Marketing means communicating a message in order to sell a product. Marketing an early childhood program means communicating the benefits of the program to the broader community in order to increase or sustain enrollment and develop supportive relationships with individuals and organizations.

The Marketing Plan

A marketing plan is a tool used to develop, implement, and monitor marketing strategies. The elements of a marketing plan may include a description of the target population the program seeks to serve, a list of marketing goals for the year, and a description of the specific marketing strategies that will be implemented in order to meet the marketing goals.

Once created, a marketing plan should be updated on a regular basis, usually annually. The ideas in and content of the marketing plan should be aligned with the organization's philosophy, mission, and vision. For example, if the program's mission is focused on serving an economically diverse community of families, the target population described in the marketing plan should reflect that priority as well.

An accurate and effective marketing plan is based on information collected from many different sources. Internal sources can include enrollment and attendance records that might reveal trends in services are in greatest demand. External sources might include administrators of other early childhood programs in the same geographic area to find out what marketing strategies have been most successful for them.

Some early childhood programs hire the services of a marketing firm or consultant in order to create a marketing plan that outlines specific and effective marketing strategies, such as distributing print materials, developing an online presence, and hosting community events.

Print Materials

For many early childhood programs, a polished and professional brochure is still the most important print material used to market the program to families. The brochure should include appealing images, a general description of the hours and the services offered, a brief description of the program philosophy, and contact information. It can be given to parents when they visit or tour the center, passed out to visitors at community events, or sent to local businesses and libraries.

Websites and Internet Marketing

For many parents looking for an early childhood program for their child, the Internet will be their first source of information. An inviting and appealing website is usually one of the most important tools for establishing an online presence. Media savvy early childhood administrators can also use blogs and social media to reach a very broad audience of prospective families or supporters (Wassom, 2011).

Blogs

A blog is a web page structured to display a series of text, images, audio, or video entries. Entries are displayed in reverse chronological order, and most blogs are frequently updated with timely and current items. An early childhood program might use a blog to keep parents informed about special events and to share good news about the staff's accomplishments. Note that if photos of the children are included in a blog post, care must be taken that the parents of those children have given their permission, in writing, for the use of the photos.

Social Media

Early childhood organizations are increasingly using social media sites, such as Facebook, to promote and market their services to families. A child care center or preschool can create a page in a social media site and use it to promote special events, such as fundraising auctions or holiday concerts. The page can also link to the program's website.

Signage and Appearance

Almost everything an early childhood administrator does to manage and support the program is part of marketing. Take, for example, the administrator's role in managing the program's facility. What does the appearance of the facility communicate to the children, the families, and to the broader community? Is there a sign on the building that communicates the name of the program and information about



Ashley Cooper/Corbis

What message do you think the name and logo on this sign convey about the philosophy and values of this early childhood program?

the services provided there? The condition of the building and grounds and how well the facility is cleaned and maintained also convey information about the quality of the services.

The design of the building, the aesthetic qualities, such as the colors of the walls, communicates information about the program's philosophy and values. All of these elements communicate important messages to everyone who visits or passes by the program. Anything that demonstrates the quality of the program is marketing.

Word of Mouth

As in so many other fields, one of the most powerful marketing tools in early childhood education is **word of mouth** (Murray, 2012). The best way to recruit new families is by providing a quality service that current families want to talk about. If a program doesn't have good word of mouth and families are not pleased with the program, no sign or ad is likely to make a difference. One of the smartest marketing moves an early childhood administrator can make is to ensure that the families of the children currently enrolled in the program are well informed about the benefits of the services they are receiving and that there are incentives, such as a tuition discount, for recruiting other families.

Questions to Think About

1. If "marketing" means to sell something, what product are early childhood programs selling? How is this different from selling items such as shoes or candy? How is it similar?
2. Why is word of mouth often a more powerful marketing tool than advertising?

Chapter Summary

- Establishing policies and procedures is essential to the administration of an early childhood program. Policies and procedures communicate clear expectations for both families and staff.
- Policies and procedures determine the structure and expectations for almost everything that happens in an early childhood program and are often created to align with laws, regulations, and standards.
- The implementation of policies and procedures may be made significantly more efficient and accurate through the use of technology such as database management software, financial management software, and digital document organization and storage.
- Implementation and enforcement of policies is one of the most important responsibilities of an early childhood administrator. Clearly written policies serve as tools for administrators when they have to take difficult actions, such as terminating an employee for not meeting job expectations.
- A family handbook, an employee handbook, and an administrative manual are collections of documents that describe the policies and procedures.
- The enrollment process involves many different policies and procedures and sets the tone for the long-term relationship between the program and the family. The documentation collected during the enrollment process establishes the child's file. The administrator is responsible for ensuring that all the children's files are complete, updated, and kept confidential.

- Important policies and procedures involving staff include personnel policies, job descriptions, compensation and benefit policies. Many of these policies and procedures must conform to nondiscrimination guidelines.
- Every organization must have a budget. The basic principle of sound budget planning is that income and expenses must balance.
- The financial challenge of operating an early childhood program is balancing quality, compensation, and affordability.
- Early childhood administrators use a variety of marketing strategies to promote their programs, including websites, brochures, and, most importantly, word of mouth.

Post-Test

1. Policies and procedures should be written to align with
 - a. the opinions and preferences of the children.
 - b. other businesses in the same community.
 - c. the program's philosophy, mission, and vision.
 - d. the facility's signage and website.
2. A database is a software program that
 - a. sends tuition bills to families.
 - b. organizes information about staff and families.
 - c. tracks the funds coming in and out of the program.
 - d. makes sure all the computers are turned off at night.
3. A family handbook would probably NOT contain
 - a. program philosophy and mission statement.
 - b. sample monthly curriculum plan.
 - c. pick up and drop off procedures.
 - d. names of children with food allergies.
4. The most important section of an employee handbook contains the
 - a. personnel policies.
 - b. school calendar.
 - c. administrator's contact information.
 - d. annual budget.
5. A confidentiality policy would likely require that administrators
 - a. create a school mailing list.
 - b. assign each family an enrollment number.
 - c. print out all electronic documents.
 - d. keep file cabinets locked.
6. Families are more likely to pay fees and tuition on time when the payment policy states
 - a. that credit card payments will not be accepted.
 - b. how the money from tuition and fees will be spent.
 - c. exactly when the payments are due.
 - d. why every child is valued and appreciated.

7. If an administrator must meet with an employee to discuss poor job performance, which document would be used to review the specific job expectations?
 - a. employee handbook
 - b. job description
 - c. nondiscrimination policy
 - d. enrollment application

8. A balanced budget is a budget in which
 - a. income equals expenses.
 - b. tuition rates are affordable.
 - c. the data appears on a spreadsheet.
 - d. monthly goals have been met.

9. Tuition payments are one source of
 - a. income.
 - b. grants.
 - c. expenses.
 - d. policy.

10. Which of the following is a strategy for encouraging word-of-mouth marketing?
 - a. Posting photos of the program's new playground on a Facebook page.
 - b. Submitting an article in the local newspaper profiling one of the preschool teachers.
 - c. Encouraging families to bring a friend to the school potluck dinner.
 - d. Including lunch menus as a feature on the school's website.

Answers: 1 (c); 2 (b); 3 (d); 4 (a); 5 (d); 6 (c); 7 (b); 8 (a); 9 (a); 10 (c)

Discussion Questions

1. What types of policies do you think might be the most difficult to implement and enforce? Why?
2. Think about what you learned about licensing and regulations in Chapter 2. Do you think the policies and procedures in an accredited program might be significantly different from a program that is not accredited? Why or why not?
3. Imagine you are an early childhood administrator who has to talk to a parent who is significantly behind in tuition payments. You are going to have to tell the parent that, according to your program's policies, if the family does not pay the tuition in the next two days, the child will be disenrolled. What words would you use to begin the conversation?

Answers and Rejoinders to Pre-Test

1. False. A policy consists of formal guidelines and requirements while a procedure is a step-by-step process for completing a task.
2. False. Handbooks and manuals are an essential part of every early childhood program and often required by regulating agencies.
3. False. While paperwork is an important part of the enrollment process, the primary responsibility of the early childhood administrator is to help the family feel welcome.

4. True. Policies regarding hiring practices are essential for recruiting, hiring, supervising, and retaining staff members.
5. False. Staff salaries and benefits are usually the largest expense in any early childhood program.
6. True. Word of mouth is one of the most important marketing strategies for early childhood programs.

Additional Resources

Web sites

Child Care Information Exchange

www.ccie.com

CCIE publishes articles, books, and online resources for early childhood administrators. The CCIE web page offers resources for administrators on topics such as recruiting staff, making the best use of technology, and improving marketing strategies.

The Foundation Center

foundationcenter.org

The Foundation Center is a comprehensive source of information about philanthropy, such as how to write foundation grant proposals.

Further Reading

Bloom, P. J. (2003). *Leadership in action: How effective directors get things done*. Lake Forest, IL: New Horizons.

A practical resource with suggestions for setting goals and putting systems in place that will help early childhood administrators implement policies and procedures regarding staff supervision and managing operations.

Shim, J. K., Siegel, J. G., & Shim, A. (2011). *Budgeting basics and beyond*. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley.

A reference tool providing introductory information about the budgeting process for both for-profit and nonprofit businesses.

Key Terms

administrative manual A set of policies and procedures that describe the administrative practices relevant only to the work of administrators.

backup system A plan for creating digital copies of electronic files.

benchmarking A process that allows programs to measure the similarities and differences between their program practices and those of other early childhood programs.

benefits A payment for work that is in addition to a salary, such as health insurance.

budget A financial forecast, usually set up for a period of one year, that describes a plan for the income and the expenses.

cash flow report A statement showing how well the program is meeting the budget in terms of actual income and expenses, as compared to projected income and expenses.

database A collection of data or information, usually in digital form.

database management system Software that manages and organizes data on your computer.

employee handbook A collection of documents describing the policies and procedures that employees must follow.

expenses The money spent or expended to run an early childhood program.

family handbook A collection of documents describing the policies and procedures that parents and family members need to know or would like to know about the early childhood program.

financial management The process of overseeing and guiding the program's finances, such as the collection of fees and the payment of bills.

foundation An institution that provides funds for charities, research, or other activities that benefit society.

fundraising The process of collecting donations or contributions through activities such as auctions, sales, or individual giving.

income The money or funds received by an organization.

line items A category of income or expenses listed in a budget document.

marketing Activities that promote the buying or selling of a specific product or service.

personnel policies A document describing the roles, expectations, rights, and responsibilities of the employees.

policy A plan or a description of what a program will do to accomplish specific tasks, such as enrollment or hiring.

procedure A description of the step-by-step process used to accomplish a task.

salary scale The plan or chart that describe the levels of compensation for each position and the various factors that determine those levels, such as academic credentials or experience.

sliding fee scale A chart showing different levels of fees, based on a family's ability to pay.

word of mouth The process of communicating information, usually opinions about a product or service, verbally from one person to another.

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